

VI. *An Account of two Observations upon the Cataract of the Eye; contain'd in a Letter from Signor Antonio Benevoli, Master-Surgeon in the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova in Florence, to Dr. Valsalva; Printed in Italian at Florence, this present Year, and communicated to the Royal Society, at the Desire of the Author, by Sir Thomas Dereham, F. R. S.*

**I**N this Letter the learned Author informs Signor *Valsalva*, that, on the 13th of *July* in the Year 1720. he had couch'd a *German* Soldier of Cataracts in both his Eyes, who immediately after the Operation recover'd the Sight of both Eyes, and continued to see till his Death, which happen'd of an Acute Illness on the 6th of *April* in this present Year. Upon this, Signor *Benevoli* took the Eyes out of their Orbits, in order to examine whether the Cataracts, which this Soldier had been couch'd of, consisted of a membranous Pellicle, as some Writers maintain; or, as others pretend, of a preternatural Opacity in the Crystalline Humour. Proceeding immediately to the Dissection of the left Eye, upon a careful and very exact Examination of all the Contents of it, he could not find any such thing as a Pellicle within it, but discover'd a small yellowish Body at the bottom of the Bulb of the Eye, of a lenticular Shape, without Adhesion to any of the other Parts

Parts of the Eye, which, upon taking it out, appear'd to be the Cryſtalline Humour grown opaque, and ſomething leſs than its natural Size, having two or three ſmall Dents, or Impreſſions, made in its Circumference, which it had received from the Needle during the Operation of couching.

The next Day he examin'd the right Eye in the ſame manner, in the Preſence of ſeveral eminent Phyſicians and Surgeons, and other curious Perſons, whom he had invited to the Demonſtration, and found in it the Cryſtalline grown opaque and depressed in the ſame manner as the former, to the bottom of the Eye, ſtill carrying the Marks of the Needle evidently upon it, but found no Pellicle within the Eye, notwithstanding the moſt diligent Search he could make for it. Signor *Benevoli* farther relates, that having formerly made ſome Experiments upon the Eyes of dead Subjects, at *Bologna*, in company with Dr. *Valsalva*, he had introduced the Needle into the Eye in the ſame Place, and in the ſame Manner, as is commonly practiſed in the Operation of couching, and having afterwards diſſected the ſame Eyes, he had always found, that the Needle had paſs'd into the Eye on the backſide of the Cryſtalline Humour, ſo that it had been impoſſible to bring the Needle forward from thence into that Part of the aqueous Humour, which is ſeated between the *Uvea* and the Cryſtalline Humour, in order to depreſs a Pellicle ſeated there, according to the common Opinion, unleſs he would have paſs'd his Needle thro' the Body of the Cryſtalline.

This curious Author likewiſe obſerves, that the aforeſaid Space, between the *Uvea* and the Cryſtalline Humour, is ſo very narrow, that tho' he finds it not impoſſible to introduce a Needle into that Space, yet there is by no means room enough to turn the Needle up and down in all Directions, with that Freedom,  
that

that is used in couching Cataracts, without wounding either the *Uvea*, or the Cryſtalline.

Laſtly, Signor *Benevoli* obſerves, that in his Practice of couching Cataracts for many Years, having generally couched about twelve or fourteen in a Year, he had always found, that he work'd upon a hard and reſiſting Subſtance, which being tenderly touch'd by the Needle, would vibrate and fluctuate backwards and forwards, and would ſometimes return againſt the Needle with a ſenſible *Impetus*, which by no means agrees with the common Notion of the Cataract's conſiſting in a Pellicle or membranous Subſtance.

## F I N I S.

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